

# HOUSING ELEMENT



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# VOLUME 2

## HOUSING ELEMENT

### VISION

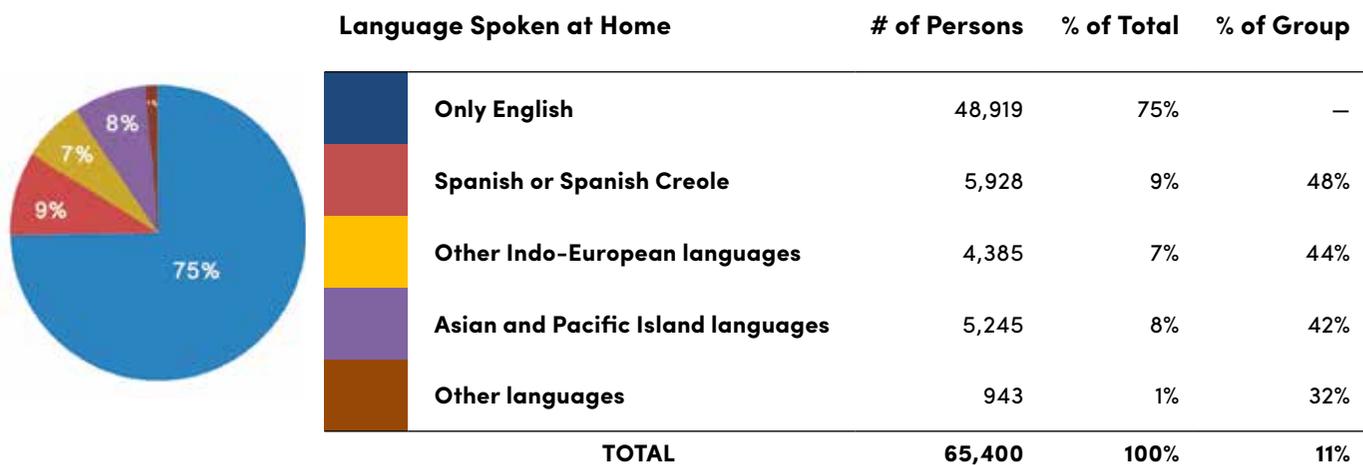
*Auburn is a place that those in our diverse community are proud to call home for a lifetime. Auburn provides opportunities for attainable housing in a variety of styles to meet the needs of all ages, abilities, cultures, and incomes. Our neighborhoods are safe and attractive, offer gathering places to meet friends and family, are connected by trails, streets, and transit, and are well kept. Our households are aware of the opportunities and services offered by governmental, educational, employment, health, and service providers that can enhance their quality of life. Volunteerism to improve our parks, schools, streets, and homes makes our neighborhoods and families stronger. Our quality housing and neighborhoods support our local economy.*

### CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

The City of Auburn commissioned a *Housing Needs and Characteristics Report* (BERK 2014) to identify community needs and develop housing element policies. The key findings of that report (summarized below) led to the development of updated goals and policies.

**Auburn is diverse.** Approximately 25% of Auburn residents speak a language other than English. This percentage is similar to that of King County (25%) and higher than that of Pierce County (14%). Other than English, Spanish (9%), Asian and Pacific Island (8%), and other Indo-European (7%) are the most common languages spoken in Auburn. See Exhibit 1.

**Exhibit 1 – Languages Spoken at Home in Auburn, 2008–2012 Five-Year Average**



Source: 2008–2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Auburn’s diverse communities may have different housing, neighborhood amenity, and service needs. For example, outreach conducted with the Hispanic community in association with the Housing Element update showed that most would recommend Auburn as a place to live for family and friends, and though residents wanted their children to grow up and remain in Auburn, they desired improved security and traffic calming. Outreach participants were interested in helping to improve their neighborhood and in volunteering.

**Trends in household size indicate that Auburn will need to ensure the availability of a variety of housing types to match the needs of both small and large households.** Auburn has both a larger household size and a larger average family size than do King and Pierce Counties overall. Data on household composition indicate, however, that significant portions of the City’s households are made up of single-person and two-person households without children, and Auburn also has a higher-than-average percentage of single-parent households. The types of homes needed for

smaller households may be different than those needed for larger households. See Exhibit 2.

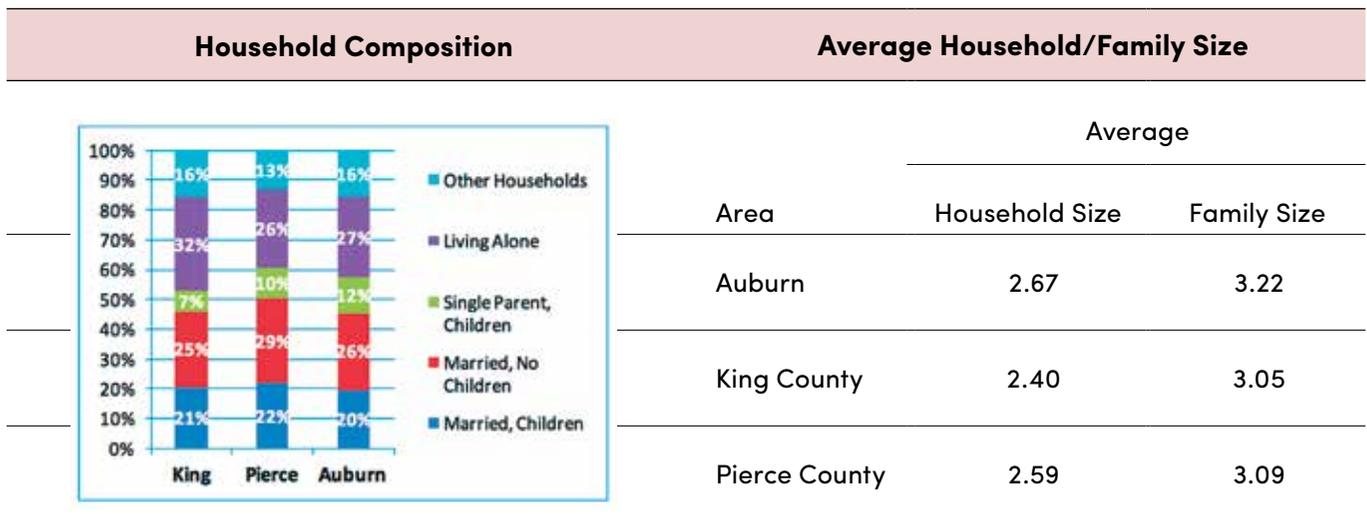
**Auburn is affordable.** A higher proportion of Auburn’s population has lower incomes, and Auburn’s housing is more affordable than housing in the region as a whole. Average rent is less than King County fair market rent, and the median sales price of owner-occupied housing is at least \$100,000 below that of King County overall. Almost half the City’s households could afford the median-priced home in Auburn, and more than two-thirds could afford the median-priced condominium unit.

**Auburn’s housing stock is older than average, and much of its rental housing stock is in fair or poor condition.** Though housing is affordable in Auburn, the City could lose some of its most affordable rental housing as structures approach the ends of their useful lives.

Exhibit 3 illustrates year-built information for the City, with older housing stock concentrated in the valley and West Hill, and newer housing predominantly in Lea Hill and Lakeland Hills.

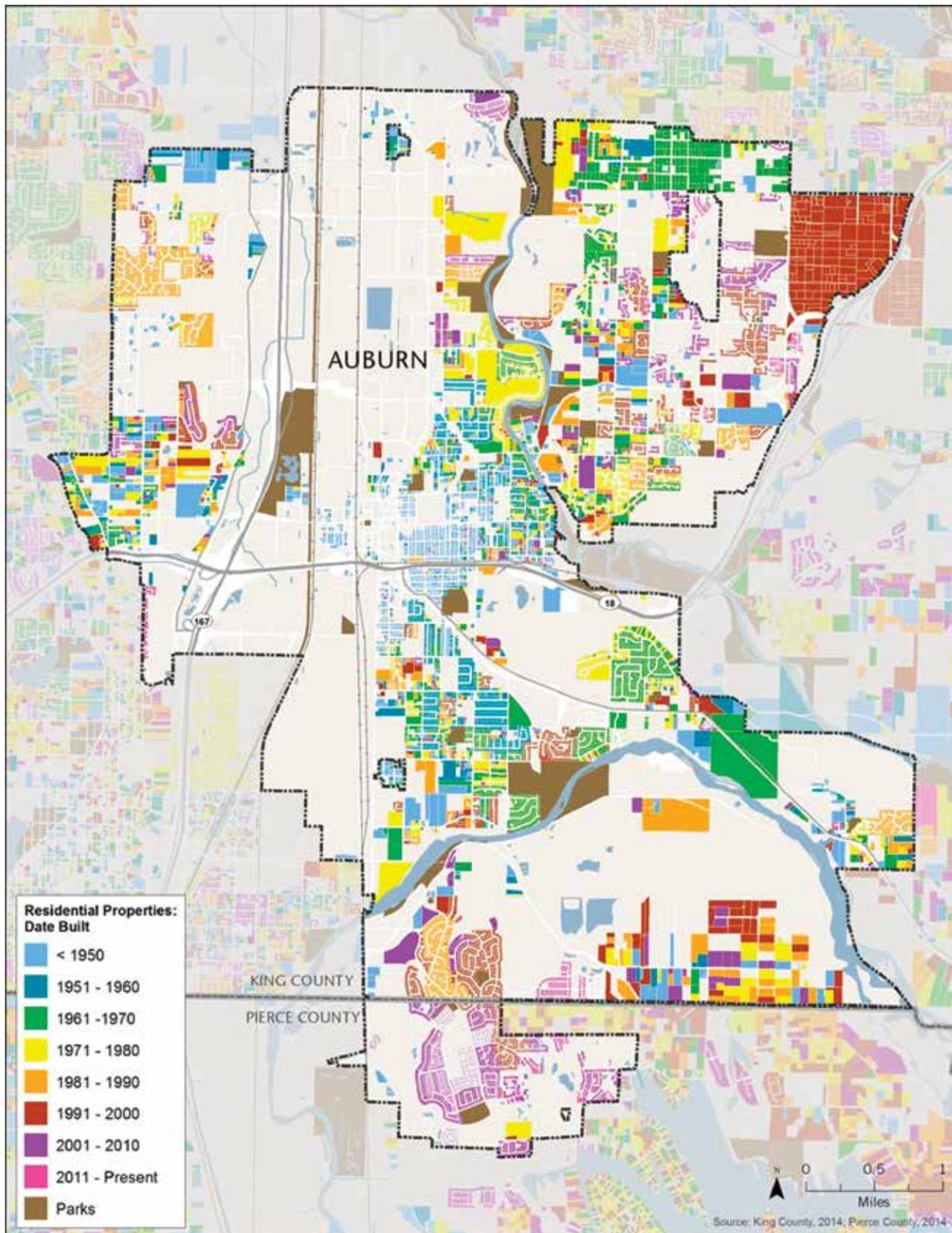
**Exhibit 2—Household Composition and Average Household Size  
– City of Auburn, King County, and Pierce County**

VOL. 2



Source: King County Assessor, 2014; Pierce County Assessor 2014; BERK Consulting 2014

**Exhibit 3 – Auburn Housing Stock – Year Built**

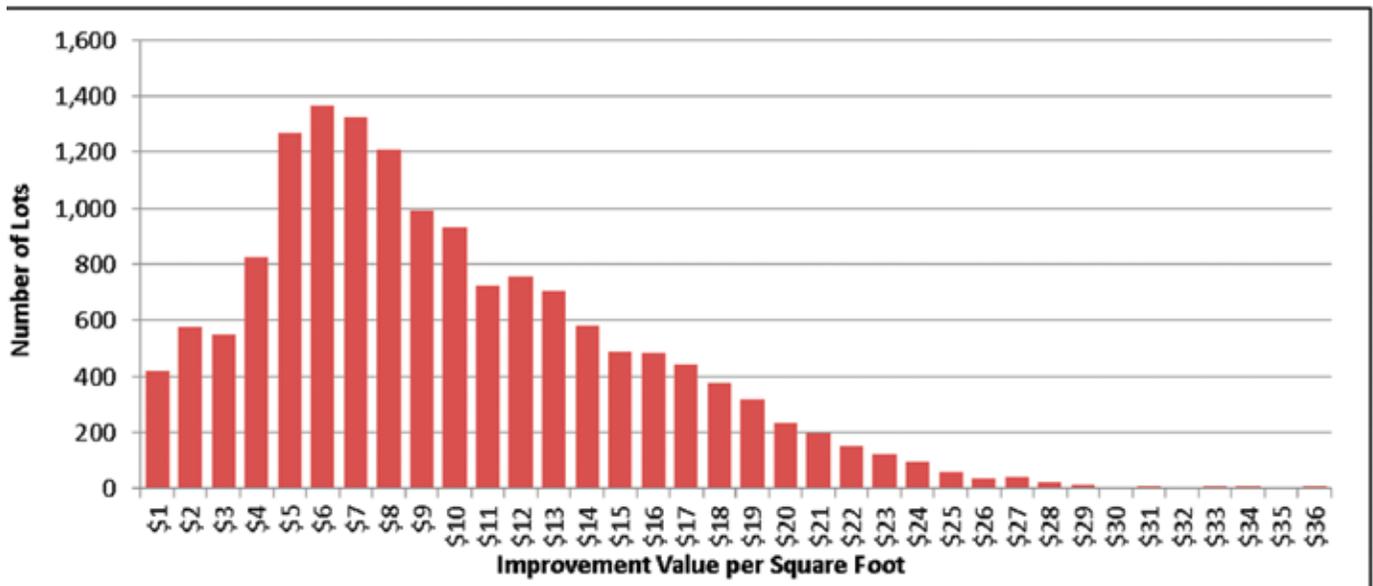


Source: 2008–2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; US Census, 2010.

The overall assessed improvement value per square foot in Auburn is relatively low, as illustrated in Exhibit 4. This is likely owing to the age of much of Auburn’s housing stock and its position within the overall metropolitan

market. Housing with the lowest improvement values per square foot are concentrated in the periphery areas outside of the city center. Exceptions include northeast Auburn around 132nd SE and the Lakeland Hills area.

**Exhibit 4—Assessed Improvement Value per Square Foot**



A closer look at the improvement value per square foot demonstrates the distribution of housing units in Auburn by per-unit value.

- Approximately 1,600 units have no or very limited improvement value listed.
- A long tail stretches toward higher improvement values per square foot, demonstrating the presences of some higher-value housing stock.
- The median improvement value (not including lots with no improvement value) is \$16.73 per square foot.

**WHY IS HOUSING IMPORTANT TO AUBURN'S FUTURE?**

The Housing Element can serve as a useful management tool to meet changing community needs for housing and address land use, economic development, transportation, environmental, and other concerns.

- A variety of housing choices can meet the needs of Auburn’s residents at all ages and affordability levels, help residents maintain and retain their homes, and promote services and amenities that improve neighborhood livability.
- Well-planned housing can support Auburn’s economic goals by making it attractive and possible for residents to live near their jobs and by serving as a source of customers to support commercial districts.
- Housing in proximity to transit or mixed-use projects can help reduce the need for costly infrastructure such as roads and sewers. Housing in proximity to a variety of transportation modes can increase a household’s disposable income and savings by reducing household transportation costs.
- Well-designed and located housing can reduce energy and water consumption, and it can promote healthy lifestyles.

## GOALS AND POLICIES

## Healthy Homes and Neighborhoods

- H-1 Recognize the important role of public improvements, facilities, and programs in providing a healthy home environment within the community. [HO-4]
- H-2 Through integrated planning for land use, parks and recreation, transportation, housing, and jobs, support active living and healthy eating opportunities. [Element audit, needs assessment, outreach]
- H-3 Promote safe and connected neighborhoods. [Element audit, needs assessment, outreach]
- Continue to implement crime prevention programs such as neighborhood block watches.
  - Through the land use and building permit process, implement principles of crime prevention through environmental design.
  - Promote community volunteerism to increase the well-being and safety of residents.
  - Invest in transportation improvements that will create safe neighborhoods for walking, biking, and connecting to transit.
- H-4 Promote housing that meets the needs of Auburn's workforce, is located and designed to support affordable multimodal transportation options, and contributes to a regional jobs-housing balance. [Element audit, needs assessment, outreach]
- H-5 Provide for housing choices in downtown and other designated mixed-use centers where infrastructure is more available or can be improved with regional and local funds. [Element audit, needs assessment, outreach]
- H-6 Improve streetscapes in developed neighborhoods. Continue to repair and/or replace deteriorated sidewalks and remove barriers to pedestrian traffic. [HO-30]
- H-7 Seek and provide assistance for the reduction of lead-based paint hazards and measures to remove mold, improve energy conservation and provide for healthy indoor air quality. [Lead-based, HO-29; also housing audit]
- H-8 Promote the City's neighborhood program. Connect residents to volunteer activities. [Element audit, needs assessment, outreach]
- H-9 When evaluating proposed developments, apply site and building design standards, require quality streetscape, landscape, on-site recreational and open space, and low-impact development measures that will improve community character and environmental quality. [Element audit, needs assessment, outreach]

**How Can Auburn Plan for Active Living and Healthy Eating?**

*Provide for a complete community with a variety of work, shopping, recreation, health and education, and home environments.*

*Implement a connected nonmotorized trail and park system with neighborhood gathering spaces.*

*Work with transit providers to connect neighborhoods to commercial and social services.*

*Facilitate access to regional transportation and job centers in and near Auburn.*

*Support art projects and cultural events to provide opportunities to build a sense of community investment, improve aesthetics, bring people together cross-culturally, and involve neighborhood youth.*

*Support community gardens to improve access to healthy food and to build community relationships.*

**Variety**

- H-10 Provide a land use plan and zoning that offers opportunities to achieve a variety of housing styles and densities for private and nonprofit housing providers. [Element audit, needs assessment, outreach]
- H-11 Promote opportunities for home ownership through single-family detached and semiattached housing, fee-simple cottages and townhouses, and condominium apartments. [Element audit, needs assessment, outreach]
- H-12 Allow accessory dwelling units as an affordable housing strategy. [HO-19]
- H-13 Encourage residential development in downtown, particularly housing that is integrated with commercial development. [HO-18]
- H-14 Implement incentives for developing underutilized parcels into new uses that allow them to function as pedestrian-oriented mixed-use neighborhoods. Existing uses that are complementary, economical, and physically viable shall integrate into the form and function of the neighborhood. [HO-26]
- H-15 Use innovative zoning provisions to encourage infill development of underutilized parcels in zones that have been identified in the Comprehensive Plan as areas where infill residential development should be encouraged. Certain development requirements for infill development may be relaxed, while requiring adherence to specific design requirements to ensure compatibility with the character of nearby existing residential structures. [HO-27]
- H-16 Allow appropriately designed manufactured housing within single-family neighborhoods, consistent with state law. [HO-13]
- H-17 Allow manufactured housing parks, transitional housing, and multifamily housing in appropriately zoned but limited areas. [HO-14]

**Quality**

- H-18 Conserve Auburn’s existing housing stock because it is the most affordable form of housing. [Objective 7.7]
- H-19 Inventory and map dilapidated properties. [Public Works, 2012]
- H-20 Organize, educate and assist property managers and owners in the creation and preservation of safe neighborhoods. [HO-28]
  - a. Offer an owner–landlord training program to better market, manage and maintain residential rental property. [Public Works, 2012]
  - b. Encourage retention of professional management assistance. [Public Works, 2012]
  - c. Recognize and publicize well-maintained apartment properties, such as by awarding a “multifamily property of the year.” [Public Works, 2012]
  - d. Advise landlords with problem buildings about the benefits of donating their property or selling it below market cost to a specially designated nonprofit organization. [Public Works, 2012]
- H-21 Promote housing improvements by property owners and building managers. Seek available assistance for housing rehabilitation. Assistance will include the development of residential infrastructure and the rehabilitation of individual properties. [HO-20]
  - a. Find public and private sources of capital and offer low-interest loans for rehabilitation. [Public Works, 2012]
  - b. Continue to participate in the Emergency Home Repair Program and consider partnering with nongovernmental organizations to maximize funds. [Public Works, 2012]
  - c. Encourage green lending for improved energy conservation, indoor air quality, and other measures. [Public Works, 2012]

- d. Help identify professional volunteers at educational or professional associations to plan redesign or architectural upgrades of the properties. [Public Works, 2012]
  - e. Support additional healthy housing and preservation strategies, such as property tax exemptions to preserve affordable housing opportunities and utilizing community health workers to offer property owners and residents the education and resources needed to maintain housing.
- H-22 Evaluate and update codes applicable to housing and provide effective and appropriate enforcement. [HO-9]
- a. Enforce city ordinances regarding abandoned properties. [Public Works, 2012]
  - b. Consider a multifamily inspection program. [Public Works, 2012].
  - c. Consider public identification of landlords who are found to be out of compliance for extended time periods and unwilling to take steps to ameliorate substandard conditions. [Public Works, 2012]
  - d. Consider a landlord compliance program where code enforcement penalties can be reduced if attending landlord training programs. [Public Works, 2012]
  - e. Work with park owners, managers and park tenants to develop policies and regulations to preserve manufactured home parks and the affordable housing they offer. [HO-21]
  - f. Consider an Auburn Housing Authority. [Council Vision]
- H-23 Promote affordable housing that meets changing demographic needs. [Element audit, needs assessment, outreach]
- H-24 Work in partnership with King and Pierce Counties and other cities to address the countywide need for housing affordable to households with moderate, low- and very-low incomes, including those with special needs and our veterans. [Element audit, needs assessment, outreach]
- a. The King County need for housing, countywide, by percentage of area median income is:
    - i. 50%–80% of AMI (moderate) – 16% of total housing supply
    - ii. 30%–50% of AMI (low) – 12% of total housing supply
    - iii. 30% and below AMI (very low) – 12% of total housing supply
  - d. Address the King County need for housing affordable to households at less than 30% AMI (very low income), through all jurisdictions working individually and collectively.
  - e. Meet Pierce County countywide planning policies to provide opportunities for housing affordable to all incomes including low incomes.
  - f. Focus Auburn’s efforts toward the countywide and community need for low- and moderate-income housing on preserving existing affordable housing with robust maintenance and repair programs, and ensuring long-term affordability of existing housing.
  - g. Act as a County leader in the exploration and implementation of new funding mechanisms and strategies to develop housing affordable at 30% AMI and below across King County and throughout South King County.
- H-25 Encourage and assist in the renovation of surplus public and commercial buildings and land into affordable housing. Additionally, explore opportunities to dedicate revenues from sales of publicly owned properties, including tax title sales, to affordable housing projects. [extension of HO-22; element audit]
- H-26 Seek, encourage and assist nonprofit organizations in acquiring depreciated apartment units for the purpose of

## Attainability

maintaining and ensuring their long-term affordability. [HO-23]

- H-27 Review and streamline development standards and regulations to advance their public benefit, provide flexibility, and minimize additional costs to housing. [Element audit, needs assessment, outreach]
- H-28 Promote compliance with federal and state fair housing laws. Support fair housing opportunities for all regardless race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, or disability. [Element audit, needs assessment, outreach]
- H-29 Explore the use of density bonuses, parking reductions, multifamily tax exemptions, fee waivers and exemptions, and permit expediting to encourage the development of housing affordable at below-market rate.
- H-30 Where practical, ensure that housing created or preserved using local public resources or by regulation benefits low-income households and retains its affordability over time.

### Special Needs

- H-31 Encourage and support human and health service organizations that offer programs and facilities for people with special needs. Support programs in particular that help people to remain within the community, including those that are veterans, disabled, seniors, single-parent households, and the homeless. [broadened HO-1]
- H-32 Assist low-income persons, who are displaced as a result of redevelopment, find affordable housing in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations. [HO-15]
- H-33 Continue to ensure that funding becomes available to support youth, veterans, and social services in Auburn. [HO-31]
- H-34 Support seniors who wish to age in place in their homes, such as with home rehabilitation services, adult day health and

senior center activities. [Element audit, needs assessment, outreach]

- H-35 Provide opportunities for transitional housing assisted living and retirement communities. [Element audit, needs assessment, outreach]
- H-36 Promote universal design principles to ensure housing is designed to be usable by all people regardless of age or abilities. [Element audit, needs assessment, outreach]

### Supportive Services

- H-37 Provide empowering training for local residents who want to participate in civic activities and who would like to improve their knowledge and skills around community leadership. [Public Works, 2012]
- H-38 Provide information in multiple languages to Auburn’s diverse communities regarding services offered by local and regional governmental, educational, employment, health, and other providers to improve residents’ quality of life and to promote resident engagement and household economic independence. [Element audit, needs assessment, outreach]
- H-39 Offer financial and homebuyer education to encourage household saving and budgeting to consider home ownership. [Public Works, 2012]
- H-40 Provide information and resources that educate and guide low-income persons toward affordable housing opportunities. Develop materials in multiple languages. [HO-16]
- H-41 Review proposals to site facilities providing new or expanded human services within the City to determine their potential impacts and whether they meet the needs of the Auburn community. Important caveats in the City's consideration will include the following: [HO-5]

ap. While Auburn will willingly accept its regional share of facilities that provide residential services, or influence residential location decisions, Auburn will expect other communities to accept their share as well.

aq. The funding of human service centers sited in Auburn that serve an area larger than Auburn would rely on an equitable regional source of funding.

ar. The siting of all facilities shall be based on sound land use planning principles and should establish working relationships with affected neighborhoods.

### Partnerships and Monitoring

H-42 Partner with South King County jurisdictions in ongoing efforts to coordinate the human, educational, and housing needs of our diverse cultural communities, such as through the Road Map Project, inter-jurisdictional housing and human services forums, and other efforts. [Element audit, needs assessment, outreach]

H-43 Work with other jurisdictions and health and social service organizations to implement a coordinated, regional approach to homelessness.

H-44 Support national, state and especially regional efforts to address the housing and

human service needs of the region and the City. [HO-7]

H-45 Explore all available federal, state and local programs and private options for financing affordable housing, removing or reducing risk factors, and preserving safe neighborhoods. [Objective 4.4]

H-46 Work in partnership with public and private housing providers, businesses, and other agencies in the provision of housing assistance to Auburn residents and business employees.

H-47 Support nonprofit organizations during all stages of siting and project planning and when applying for county, state, and federal funding.

H-48 Through the building permit process, inventory and track affordable housing opportunities within Auburn. Distribute affordable housing information to nonprofit agencies serving the homeless and low-income persons. [HO-17]

H-49 Monitor housing supply, affordability, and diversity in Auburn and its contribution to the countywide and regional housing need. [Element audit, needs assessment, outreach]

H-50 Review and amend, a minimum every 5 years, local housing policies and strategies. [Element audit, needs assessment, outreach]

**HOUSING OBJECTIVES/IMPLEMENTATION**

The City has developed housing objectives implementation strategies addressing housing

diversity, condition, attainability, and programs to serve special needs. See Exhibit 5. The City will monitor the objectives over time.

**Exhibit 5 – Housing Objectives and Tools**

| Outcomes   | Indicators   | Example Tools  |
|--|--|--|
| Improve housing quality  | Increased quality of rental housing  | Housing rehabilitation and repair loans<br>Loans for energy conservation and healthy indoor air quality<br>City-sponsored and nonprofit property manager programs<br>Housing inspection program<br>Code enforcement<br>Community volunteer program |
| Meet demand for new housing units  | Land capacity to meet or exceed housing target   | Land use plan and zoning   |
| Promote housing ownership  | Maintain or increase homeownership rates   | Single-family dwellings including small lots<br>Accessory dwelling units<br>Cottages, townhomes  |
| Allow for a variety of housing types to meet size and age and cultural trends        | Increased numbers of small units with neighborhood recreation and service amenities<br>Retention of housing stock with larger units  | Single-family dwellings including small lots<br>Accessory dwelling units<br>Multiplexes, cottages, townhomes<br>Mixed-use zoning<br>Incentives infill housing types  |
| Increase opportunities for housing to very-low, low-, and moderate-income households | Increased numbers of ownership dwellings available to moderate incomes<br>Increased mixed-use development for all incomes<br>Increased preservation and improvement of rental housing with long-term affordability commitments | Accessory dwelling units<br>Downtown incentives<br>Infill incentives<br>Permit and impact fee waivers<br>See also "improve housing quality" above  |
| Improved opportunities for special needs housing and services                        | Greater match of housing to special needs including housing for all ages and abilities as well as the homeless   | Community services programs<br>Partnerships with nonprofit housing providers and non-governmental organizations  |
| Monitor housing supply, affordability, and diversity                                 | Address achievement of indicators above  | Monitor in conjunction with regular Comprehensive Plan updates and new countywide planning policy housing targets  |